



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

June 23, 2017

Chairman Bill Shuster
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Peter A. DeFazio
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Frank LoBiondo
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Rick Larsen
592 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for H.R. 2097 the 21st Century AIRR Act Section 129 language that authorizes Indian tribal employment preference

Dear Honorable Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Chairman Frank LoBiondo, and Ranking Member Rick Larsen,

On behalf of the Navajo Nation, I write to express my support for the language in the 21st Century AIRR Act that authorizes Indian tribal employment preference for aviation programs under the Department of Transportation.

The Navajo Nation has six (6) National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) airports that provide critical emergency evacuation services for the Navajo Nation's rural communities. Federally recognized Indian tribes with NPIAS airports are eligible to receive Federal Aviation Administration grants. Across the Navajo reservation, NPIAS airport projects provide employment opportunities for communities where the unemployment rates top 50%. Depriving tribal citizens of one of the limited employment opportunities in their community neither supports tribal economic development, nor, more importantly, honors the principle of tribal sovereignty.

The language in Section 129 of H.R. 2097 introduced 21st Century AIRR Act provides parity with the other agencies that allow Indian tribal employment preference when federal funds are received by an Indian tribe. I urge the passage of the language into public law.

Sincerely,

THE NAVAJO NATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Begaye", written over a horizontal line.

Russell Begaye, President